Introduction

ON A LATE SUMMER'S DAY in 1886, grape pickers at Dalwood Vineyards in Australia's Hunter Valley paused to be photographed. The men wore slouch hats, waistcoats, and cotton shirts with the sleeves rolled up, the women heavy skirts and cotton bonnets to shield their faces and necks from the searing sun. They picked together, collecting the grapes in gallon buckets, which were emptied into a wooden barrel on a cart drawn by a single pack horse. The grapes—black verdot, golden shiraz, and black hermitage—were grown head-high, espaliered in neat rows. The vineyard's soil is pale and dusty in the sepia photographs and only a few towering date palm trees break up the monotony of the vines. The surrounding land is scrubby and bland, with no concessions to ornamental gardening: this is a commercial operation, not a tourist attraction (see fig. 1). John Wyndham, the vineyard's owner, boasted that at seventy-eight acres and growing, through "judicious and intelligent expenditure of capital," the vineyard could support his large family comfortably and also employ dozens of families in seasonal work.[1] The Wyndhams and their workers were British settlers whose families had made the three-month ocean journey to the Antipodes in search of a better life. John Wyndham now had one of the largest wineries in the Australian colonies and was rich and respectable. He valued his estate at £20,000 and his wine stock at ten thousand,[2] and he was proud of what his family had achieved.

The main Dalwood House, built by John's father, George Wyndham, in the 1820s, sits on a rolling hill overlooking the vineyards. A single-story stone house, it is large but not majestic, despite the Greek Revival columns supporting the porch. The columns seem out of place in the commercial vineyard, a fanciful detail in an otherwise austere landscape. George Wyndham had been raised in Wiltshire, in southern England, and had emigrated to

FIGURE 1. Grape pickers at Dalwood Vineyards, 1886. H. Ballard, *Photographs of the Dalwood Vineyards, near Branxton, New South Wales, Australia, 1886*, plate 5. Used with permission from Cambridge University Library, Royal Commonwealth Society Papers GBR/0115/RCS/Y3086B.

Australia as a young man. The house's unusual architecture reflects his upbringing in a world that viewed classical Greece and Rome as paradigms of imperial valor and civilization. These ideas emigrated with Wyndham and shaped his business and, by extension, the character of his community. John Wyndham was proud of his success and wanted affirmation of that success back "home" in Britain; he undoubtedly also wanted British people to buy his Hunter Valley wine. The photographs he had commissioned were arranged in an elegant album and sent directly to the Royal Colonial Society in London, hand-inscribed with Wyndham's dedication. They now rest in the manuscripts library of the University of Cambridge, where I carefully turned the album's stiff pages.

The contemporary significance of this historical source was striking when I left Cambridge for nearby Stansted Airport. On a late summer's day in 2017, the terminal was crammed with travelers, lured by cheap airfares and the promise of sunshine in southern Europe. Millions of British people enjoy an annual holiday in a warm climate and consider it almost a birthright to escape the U.K.'s unpredictable weather to sip wine in the sun. At the Costa Coffee shop in the airport's arrivals hall, there are three wines available for those who want to get a head start on their holidays. All are Australian: Jacob's Creek Semillon Chardonnay, Jacob's Creek Shiraz Cabernet, and

Jacob's Creek Sparkling Rosé, at £4.25 for an 187.5ml glass.[3] The Jacob's Creek brand has only been around since the 1970s, but it was built on a vineyard established in the mid-nineteenth century. It is a household name in the U.K., keenly priced and popularized through television advertisements featuring a welcoming winemaker in a slouch hat.[4] Australian wines are affordable, approachable, and ubiquitous in British public spaces. Long associated with domestic beer and spirits, the U.K. has become a country of confirmed wine drinkers: on average a British adult now guzzles more than thirty bottles of wine each year, much of it produced by former British colonies Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand.[5] The U.K. has been one of the world's largest import markets for wine for several hundred years. Britain's thirst for wine has a much longer history than most contemporary consumers recognize. Indeed, it is both the British demand for wine imports and British colonial expansion that have led to the creation of much of wine's "New World."

Why did British settlers in Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand decide to produce wine? How did the fledgling wine industries in British colonies grow to become the approachable New World wines of the twentieth century, and why has Britain remained such a vital market for the wines of its former colonies? How has wine become ubiquitous in modern Britain, which was traditionally a class-conscious country of beer drinkers who considered wine to be the stuff of snobs and elites? And was the wine any good? This book explores and answers those questions.

Weaving together economic, social, and cultural histories of wine production and consumption over the past three centuries, this book tells the story of how wine-growing and wine markets expanded through British imperialism. It documents and analyzes wine production from the eighteenth century up to the present day in former British colonies: primarily Australia and South Africa, but also Canada, Cyprus, Malta, New Zealand, and India. It tells the unlikely story of how British settlers with no winemaking experience crossed the globe and planted vineyards, believing that they were advancing the civilizing mission of the British Empire. In turn, I demonstrate how colonial wine producers saw the British import market as paramount, and I examine the efforts of colonial producers to sell their wine to the British public through networks of agents, shippers, importers, and retailers. My focus is mostly on the British market for these wines, and to a lesser degree the domestic markets of the producing countries. I show how governments and the British public sector also played a critical role in the

pricing and marketing of colonial wines, and how frequently colonial winemakers were frustrated with the indifference of London lawmakers. Ironically, wines from the Commonwealth did not enjoy their highest popularity in Britain during the heyday of British imperialism, but rather after the realization of decolonization in the 1980s.

One reason that the history of wine in the British Empire has not been written is because the amounts of wine produced, traded, and consumed appear small, both in terms of total agricultural production and as a percentage of total wine consumption. It is a mistake to conclude that because the industry was small, it was insignificant. What this book demonstrates is that those involved in the imperial wine industry bestowed upon it an ideological and sentimental value that vastly exceeded its worth in crude fiscal terms. Indeed, the very fact that the industry was established and persisted over long periods of limited commercial success testifies to the triumph of ideas over income.

Wine thus allows us to explore the contradictions of Britain's colonial empire. This is not a story of the glories of imperialism: impressive though the reach of British economic power was, wine actually offers a curious counterpoint to imperial hubris. Colonial commodity history is ripe with stories of entrepreneurship and pluckiness, but also with dispossession and pain. South African wine, for example, was originally created through the labor of enslaved people, and Indigenous Australian activists deny the legitimacy of colonial land claims. This book takes one step toward reintegrating the issues confronting postcolonial states like South Africa and Australia, with the long histories of European trade and consumption.[6]

Finally, I examine whether, why, and when British consumers drank colonial wines—either as opposed to a different beverage, or as opposed to European wines. Britain has long had a strong culture of drink, but consumer tastes have changed over time. Over the twentieth century, Britain transformed from a country where wine consumption was very low and socially restricted to elites, to one where wine consumption had become common and visible. Studying the consumption of colonial wine shows the British public in an unusually self-conscious pose. The story of broadening wine consumption in Britain is one of consumers needing to be taught, reassured, and made confident in their choices, and discussions of wine drinking often reveal deep cultural insecurities. Generally speaking, wine "democratized" over the twentieth century, becoming cheaper, more widely available, and more socially widespread. This was due in large part to the growth in availability of colonial wines. At once quotidian and exotic, wine allows us to

follow deep social changes in Britain, from the fine wine imbibed at Victorian gentlemen's clubs to the plonk quaffed at drizzly barbecues in the early twenty-first century. Britain has also transformed from a country where the overwhelming amount of wine consumed was of European origin, to one where nearly half of the wine consumed is from outside Europe. How, why, and when these transitions took place is the focus of this book.

THE OUTLINE OF THIS BOOK

This is a transnational history covering wine production, trade, and consumption over three centuries. Although this book is chronological in structure, it is not intended to be a comprehensive history of wine production in the three main countries of study. There are two foundational concepts anchoring this broad-reaching approach: the first is the idea of a New World of wine and its relation to European imperialism, and the second is the idea of the "civilizing mission" driving British imperialism. These concepts are explained in two introductory chapters.

The historical narrative then opens with an empire under construction and in flux: the Cape Colony, and its Dutch-planted vines, becoming British through the Napoleonic Wars, and Australia and New Zealand being settled with a mishmash of British rejects. Part 1 explains the origins of the imperial wine industry, lays out the main characters in establishing wine industries, and documents the first decades of their labor. These characters include James Busby, who taught winemaking in Australia before being appointed the first British representative to New Zealand, where he brokered the Treaty of Waitangi. These chapters also engage directly with the issue of labor in the wine industry, and the devastating effect European agriculture had on native inhabitants.

Part 2 navigates the cool reception these early colonial wines received back in Britain, sketching the journey of colonial wine from the colony to the British table. While the second half of the nineteenth century was a period of growth for Australia and New Zealand, in South Africa, on the other hand, there was already crisis and talk of an industry in decline. British support for viticulture in the colonies was offset by tariff regimes that frustrated colonial winemakers.

I demonstrate, using a range of textual and pictorial sources, the cultural dreams vignerons pinned on wine as a "civilizing" force in a new society.

Lobbying for Britons to consume Australian wine, winemaker Hubert de Castella argued that "pride and interest, two powerful agents, keep the mother country and Australia bound together."[7] I explore the challenges colonial winemakers and their importers faced in marketing and selling their wine in Britain from 1860 up to the First World War, as they tried to market their wine as a distinctly imperial choice of beverage.

The First World War was cataclysmic for both British and colonial societies and it also dramatically reordered the international wine market. Part 3 examines how colonial wine producers responded. There were dramatic changes in British wine consumption in the interwar period. European wine competitors were ravaged by wars and colonial wines offered an alternative, and an expanding consumer society also saw wine being promoted to a broadening socioeconomic group as an accessible and approachable alternative to European wines. Moreover, Britain's colonies of white settlement had now become self-governing dominions, and they were asserting themselves as trading partners in the interwar period.

A "doodle bug" destroyed wine cellars during the Second World War, which, like the previous one, had a cataclysmic effect on society in Britain, its colonies, and the dominions. It also was a boon to colonial wine producers, who filled the market gap left by France. As with the First World War, one unexpected outcome was the travel and exposure it afforded to many British people. Part 4 brings our narrative full circle: if the eighteenth and nineteenth century had been about European "conquest," in the second half of the twentieth century the excolonial producers would conquer the British wine market. In 1977 British comedy ensemble Monty Python spoofed Australian table wines, inventing vintages and descriptions, such as "Melbourne Old-and-Yellow," a "good fighting wine . . . which is particularly heavy, and should be used only for hand-to-hand combat."[8] A decade later, Australia emerged from under this poor reputation. Starting in the 1970s, colonial wines began receiving major critical attention from international wine writers, and in the late 1980s they flooded the British market, which we might consider the final "democratization" of wine consumption post-1970. The availability of inexpensive New World wine imports in turn is a driving factor in changing British consumer preferences: drinking New World wine has become a commonly recognizable British leisure activity, associated and advertised with a modern outdoorsy lifestyle (of South African and Australian rugby players manning barbecues). We return to ethical discussions of wine production and consumption, both in terms of apartheid South

African wines (which were subject to some boycott through 1991) and environmental concerns in wine production and shipping.

Empire was a critical stimulus for wine production in colonies of white settlement, chiefly Australia and South Africa. This was not because there was enormous market demand in Britain (until the 1970s there was not), nor even that there were consistently favorable trade terms for colonial producers (for most of the period they enjoyed no special protection and sometimes they were categorically worse-off than European competitors). Rather, empire provided a coherent belief system that wine could be a stabilizing and civilizing tool in a new society. Empire provided an obvious export market to cultivate and established routes for long-distance trade, and gave hope to winemakers that if British consumers would only try colonial wines, they would appreciate them, at the very least as a comestible symbol of imperial unity. Britain was slowly shaped into a wine-drinking society thanks to its colonies, because over time these colonies provided affordable, accessible wines that were not intimidating and that seemed consistent with popular patriotism. This history of wine in the New World also uses wine as a barometer of profound social change in Britain over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A NOTE ABOUT SOURCES

Per capita consumption is a very rough measure, and we should not assume that people in the past consumed wine in the same manner as we do today. We also should not let our assumptions about class, ethnicity, or gender close our eyes to potentially rich sources. Wine history often focuses on the obvious sources left by European male politicians, importers, and consumers; this is logical, as these sources are the plentiful. However, the absence of a historical source does not mean the absence of a historical experience. Some of the sources historians would love to read are just not available: illiterate, abused workers on eighteenth-century South African plantations have left few firsthand accounts of their experiences. However, we can be creative with sources to build a broader picture. If we look, for example, at publications written by and for British women, we get a different impression of wine consumption. Nineteenth-century household manuals, which were aimed at women, demonstrate that wine was not only drunk straight, but was very popular in wine punches (which would go out of fashion after World War I

but return in the 1950s), in which wine was mixed with fruit juices, spices, and liqueurs, and served either warm or over ice. An 1887 recipe advised how even the cheapest wine from Germany or eastern France could be extended and prepared for a party: "May Drink.—Put into a large glass mug or china bowl about 2 doz. black-currant leaves, a small handful of woodruff,[9] and a quantity, according to taste, of pounded lump sugar and lemon juice; pour in 2 bot. hock or Moselle, never mind how common. Stir the whole occasionally for 1/2 hour, and serve."[10] Many more people might have been drinking wine than the per capita figures suggest, if wine was stretched and served in such concoctions. Historians are generally comfortable extrapolating that if a "May Drink" recipe was included in a household manual, then it was probably prepared by some readers and there was probably a culture of preparing wine punches. Strictly speaking, though, we only have proof that the recipe was published. This is a recurring methodological issue in the study of consumption. We have very few records or sources that document what most consumers bought. Wine retailers recorded numbers of sales in their business records, but rarely left descriptors or statistics of the types of clients they served. Shifts in overall wine consumption levels often leave us guessing: if more wine was consumed, did a broader range of people drink wine, or did the same people drink more wine? We make our best guess using the broadest range of sources available. I draw on a vast range of sources in this book to build the fullest picture of wine in the empire: its production, trade, and consumption. These include official government documents; records of wine producers; the correspondence of agents, importers, and journalists; advertisements; wine lists and menus; recorded interviews; and literature and popular culture. Some of these sources provide hard data and allow me to undertake quantitative analysis; some of them, whether texts or images, allow me to extract deep cultural assumptions through patient reading and careful probing.